California`s Water Future
A Framework for Action

Summary

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is an unprecedented collaborative process to build a framework for management of California's most precious resource: water.

The CALFED plan has four distinct goals:

1. To restore the ecological health of the Bay-Delta, the largest estuary on the West Coast.
2. To improve water supply reliability for the State's farms and growing cities that use water from the Delta.
3. To protect the drinking water quality for the 22 million Californians who rely on Delta water for their supplies.
4. To provide long-term protection and maintenance for the 1,100 miles of the Delta levee system.

This plan provides a specific set of actions and proposed investments for the next 7 years (Stage 1) to meet those goals and to assure a balanced approach to implementation. Implementation will not occur overnight, but this document, and the final environmental documents and Record of Decision that will follow, will provide a long-awaited blueprint to solving long standing conflicts through a sustained effort by CALFED agencies and stakeholders. All actions of the CALFED Program are interrelated and interdependent and will move forward together.

Ecosystem Restoration Program

- Invest over $1 billion in Stage 1 through a combination of federal, state, and user funds in a comprehensive effort to restore the ecological health of the Bay-Delta ecosystem, including:
  - Restore habitat in the Delta, Suisun Bay and Marsh, and Yolo Bypass.
  - Recover state and federal listed species.
  - Implement large-scale restoration projects on selected tributaries.
  - Acquire streamflow in upstream areas through voluntary purchases.
  - Improve fish passage through modification or removal of dams.
  - Implement integrated flood management and ecosystem restoration.

- Propose a permanent source of revenue for the Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) through legislation establishing a water user fee.

Watersheds

Invest $300 million in Stage 1 to promote locally-led watershed management activities for flood management, ecosystem restoration, water quality improvement, and water supply reliability.

Water Supply Reliability

- Improve water supply reliability for agricultural and urban users in the first four years of Stage 1 through the following:
  - Establish a regulatory baseline by delineating existing requirements.
  - Establish an Environmental Water Account (EWA) with an average of 380,000 acre feet of water set aside annually to provide additional water for fishery purposes beyond the regulatory baseline.
  - No reductions, beyond regulatory levels, in Central Valley Project (CVP) or State Water Project (SWP) Delta exports.
  - Seek approval of joint point of diversion and share water from Joint Point of Diversion between the CVP and EWA.
  - Implement conjunctive management projects, conservation measures, and water transfers.
- Develop water management tools such as joint point of diversion, operational flexibility, interagency cooperation, the EWA, conservation, groundwater storage, and land retirement, in partnership with affected users and other stakeholders, to meet water supply targets for south of Delta CVP agricultural water service contractors.
- Develop a drought contingency plan, building upon the experiences of the drought water bank of 1991, 1992 and 1994.

Storage

Expanding water storage capacity is critical to the successful implementation of all aspects of the CALFED Program. The program identifies actions that will be taken in Stage 1 to expand storage capacity at existing reservoirs and strategically located off-stream sites by approximately 950,000 acre feet, evaluate other potential storage projects, and implement a major expansion of environmentally sensitive groundwater storage with local partners for an additional 500,000 to 1 million acre feet.

- Develop approximately 250,000 acre feet of in-Delta storage to provide both fishery benefits and enhanced water project flexibility.
- Expand CVP storage in Shasta Lake by approximately 300,000 acre feet.

- Expand Los Vaqueros Reservoir by up to 400,000 acre feet with local partners, as part of a Bay Area water quality and water supply reliability initiative.

- Construct a bypass canal to the San Felipe Unit at the San Luis Reservoir to enable more effective water supply operation of San Luis Reservoir, with potential effective storage capacity enhancement of up to 200,000 acre feet.

- Proceed, with local partners, to complete evaluation of Sites Reservoir, proposed off-stream storage in the Sacramento Valley.

- Proceed, with local partners, to complete evaluation of additional storage in the upper San Joaquin River watershed, either enlargement of Millerton Lake at Friant Dam or a functionally equivalent storage project in the region.

- Develop locally managed and controlled groundwater and conjunctive use projects in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys with a total of 500,000 to 1 million acre feet of additional storage capacity.

- Encourage basin-wide groundwater management planning, and condition future state funding for water programs on the development of local groundwater management plans.

Conveyance

Improve water conveyance facilities in the Delta in order to improve water supply reliability for In-Delta and export users, support continuous improvement in drinking water quality, and complement ecosystem restoration:

South Delta Actions:

- Allow SWP facilities to increase pumping from the current limit of 6,680 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 8,500 cfs and eventually to 10,300 cfs.

- Design and construct new fish screens at the Clifton Court Forebay and Tracy pumping plant facilities to allow the export facilities to pump at full capacity more regularly.

- Dredge and install operable barriers to improve water flows and water quality in the South Delta.

- Design and construct floodway improvements on the lower San Joaquin River to provide conveyance, flood control and ecosystem benefits.

- Reduce agricultural drainage in the Delta.

North Delta Actions:

- Evaluate and implement improved operational procedures for the Delta Cross Channel to address fishery and water quality concerns.

- Simultaneously evaluate a screened through-Delta facility on the Sacramento River of up to 4000 cfs.

- Design and construct floodway improvements on the lower Mokelumne River to provide conveyance, flood control and ecosystem benefits.

Interties, System Flexibility:

- Evaluate and construct an intertie between the SWP and CVP facilities at or near Tracy.

- Explore cross-valley interconnections in the southern San Joaquin Valley for potential water exchanges of high-quality Sierra water for urban users.

Endangered Species Act Commitments

To provide regulatory stability during the initial period of Stage 1, the CALFED agencies will provide a commitment, subject to legal requirements, that for the first four years of Stage 1, there will be no reductions, beyond existing regulatory levels, in CVP or SWP Delta exports resulting from measures to protect fish under the state and federal endangered species acts.

Water Use Efficiency and Conservation

Implement an aggressive water use efficiency program to most quickly make the best use of existing water supplies:

- Build on the existing long-term efforts of the Agricultural Water Management Council and the Urban Water Conservation Council process, a multi-year collaborative stakeholder process.

- Use a competitive grant/loan incentive program to assure cost-effective investments in water use efficiency.

- During the first four years, state and federal governments will invest $500 million, with an additional $500 million from local matching funds.

Water Quality

Address the drinking water quality concerns of the more than 22 million Californians who rely on Delta water through four broad categories of actions:

- Capture more drinking water during periods of high Delta water quality.

- Reduce contaminants and salinity that impair Delta water quality.

- Evaluate alternative approaches to drinking water treatment to address growing concerns over disinfection byproducts and salinity.

- Enable voluntary exchanges or purchases of high quality source waters for drinking water uses.

Invest approximately $950 million in water quality programs, the major elements of which are:

- Develop a Bay Area Blending/Exchange Project that enables Bay Area water districts to work cooperatively to address water quality and supply reliability concerns.

- Address drainage problems in the San Joaquin Valley.

- Implement source controls in the Delta and its tributaries.

- Support the ongoing efforts of the Delta Drinking Water Council.

- Implement aggressive measures to improve Delta water quality for agricultural users.

- Facilitate water quality exchanges and similar programs to make high quality Sierra water available to urban areas.

- Invest in treatment technology demonstration projects.

- Control runoff into the California aqueduct and other similar facilities.

- Address water quality problems at the North Bay Aqueduct.

- Improve dissolved oxygen conditions in the San Joaquin River near Stockton.

- Study recirculation of export water to reduce salinity and improve dissolved oxygen in the San Joaquin River.

Water Transfers

In order to facilitate an efficient water market, CALFED will focus on the following:

- Increase the availability of existing facilities for water transfers,

- Develop streamlined transfer approval procedures for certain kinds of transactions (intra-regional transfers, short-term transfers, dry-year transfers), and enact legislation as necessary.

CALFED will also develop the “on-Tap” on-line water transfer information source which will provide real-time information on the availability of transfer opportunities, as well as up-to-date information about ongoing transfer activity.

Levees

Invest approximately $450 million in Stage 1 to provide long-term protection by maintaining and improving the integrity of the extensive Delta levee system:

- Provide base level funding to help local reclamation districts reconstruct all Delta levees to a base level of protection.

- Enhance levee stability on levees that have particular importance in the system, with priority for life and personal property, water quality, protecting agricultural production, and protecting ecosystems.

- Develop Best Management Practices to control and reverse land subsidence on Delta islands, and work with local districts and landowners to implement cost effective measures.

- Refine the Delta Emergency Management Plan, and develop a Delta Risk Management Strategy that identifies risks to Delta levees, evaluates consequences, and recommends actions by 2001.

Science

The CALFED science program will bring world-class science to all elements of the program:

- Appoint a lead scientist and an expert science panel to better integrate objective scientific review into the CALFED program.

- Implement the Comprehensive Monitoring, Assessment, and Research Program (CMARP) to inform and guide adaptive management.

Governance

Support legislation to create a joint state/federal commission to oversee the long-term implementation of the CALFED program.

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